

Inspection of CANTO Learning Limited

Inspection dates:

16 to 18 May 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Provision for learners with high needs	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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Information about this provider

CANTO Learning Limited (CANTO) is an independent learning provider and charity. Leaders offer courses to young people and adults with special educational needs and/or disabilities who are aged 16 to 25 years. These courses are called iCAN.

Leaders plan four pathways as part of the iCAN curriculum. Each has a key focus. Pathway one is communication, two is life skills, three is independence and four is employment. Students join one of the pathways and follow an individual learning plan. They attend a purpose-built centre in Northampton, typically for three days a week. There is a newly built woodwork facility and café at the site.

At the time of the inspection, 43 students were studying individual study programmes, of whom 41 had an education, health and care (EHC) plan.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Students enjoy their time at CANTO. They value the support of enthusiastic and friendly staff who help them to become more confident. Over time, students who initially find it difficult to speak to anybody in class join in with group activities, critique their peers' work and speak to unfamiliar people.

Students use their new knowledge, skills and behaviours to benefit their wider lives. For example, they begin to prepare and cook dishes more independently or assist their parents or carers at home. Students who undertake external work experience benefit greatly from these activities. They complete the tasks set for them diligently and work effectively to support their peers.

Staff skilfully help students to learn how to manage their behaviours well. Students receive high-quality guidance that enables them to understand their feelings and emotions. Over time, they develop useful methods to better manage these.

Students rightly value the many opportunities they get to take part in physical activities. They play a wide range of sports or go on mindfulness walks. This helps them to understand how to stay fit and healthy.

Students feel safe attending their classes, while on work experience and when they go on visits. They learn valuable information to keep themselves safe when online.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders pride themselves on their capacity to meet a wide range of students' needs. They plan curriculums flexibly and make effective adjustments to support students into education. For example, those with the highest level of need focus on communication and life skills. Students with less complex needs follow a curriculum that enables them to prepare for employment or further education.

Most teachers plan subject curriculums well. In photography, students start with basic camera operations and how to use a camera safely before learning about the exposure triangle. On courses such as those for woodwork and mathematics, students benefit from similar good planning. As a result, students incrementally build substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours.

In most cases, staff ensure that students' EHC plan targets are interwoven effectively with the curriculum content. However, a small minority of teachers' planning is not ambitious enough for students, particularly those on pathway two. In these cases, targets do not sufficiently challenge students to develop their academic skills, such as learning new words.

Teachers are well qualified. In most cases, they work closely with support assistants to meet students' individual needs. Staff make a wide range of adjustments that support students to access their courses.

Teachers mostly explain topics clearly and design lesson activities well. For example, teachers help students to see how budgeting relates to decisions they may make once they are living independently. As a result, students quickly understand the concept of keeping to a budget.

In a small number of cases, teachers do not set up activities clearly enough so that students know what they need to do. Students attend sessions with their key workers at the start, middle and end of the day. During this time, they can access helpful support and guidance. However, these sessions do not have the same sense of purpose as other aspects of the curriculum.

Most teachers plan opportunities for students to problem-solve and work as a team. For example, when building planters, students work out what to do when the materials they have are not the right size. As a result, they develop their thinking skills and confidence to work with others. Teachers mostly check understanding well in lessons through questioning. They complete useful reviews of students' progress against their learning plan targets at the end of each session.

Students on pathways one, three and four demonstrate clear progress against their EHC plan targets. Although students on pathway two achieve their targets, these do not always include enough focus on the development of students' practical skills.

The careers lead and staff work closely with students and their parents to devise effective career or next step plans. Students and parents receive good guidance and transition support for students' next steps.

Most students pass their qualifications. Achievement rates are high in photography and cookery, but too low in functional skills. Most students progress to positive destinations, such as courses at further education colleges or social care support. Last year, none of the pathway four students was ready to progress to a supported internship. Student progression plans show that this should improve in the next academic year, but it was too early for inspectors to judge this information.

Students study a broad personal development curriculum. Staff teach them a wide range of relevant topics well. This includes a focus on healthy relationships and staying safe. Staff raise most students' awareness of fundamental British values. Students can discuss topics such as animal rights and the importance of voting.

Leaders meet weekly to review students' progress and discuss any barriers to their studies. Swift action is taken to address any issues. Leaders complete annual self-assessment and develop a useful improvement plan. They monitor the plan carefully. Actions are timely and have a positive impact on students' experiences.

Leaders support staff to undertake relevant professional development. For example, staff complete bespoke training in behaviour management techniques. As a result, staff competently and skilfully manage a wide range of behaviours well.

At the start of the academic year, leaders introduced a useful additional governance board. This links to the long-established board of trustees. As a result, there is greater scrutiny of leaders' actions and progress. Governors are well qualified and experienced. They spend time getting to know staff and students through frequent site visits. This helps them to check and evaluate what leaders tell them about the quality of education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders develop clear policies and procedures to safeguard their students. The designated safeguarding leads are appropriately trained. Staff complete suitable annual safeguarding training and receive frequent and relevant updates. Staff are clear about what to do if they have any safeguarding concerns. Leaders keep detailed notes of any incidents and actions.

Staff know their students' needs and behaviours well. They ensure that students receive timely support when they need it. Leaders carefully consider what their students are most at risk from and frequently revisit these topics. For example, students often learn about internet safety or the risk of fraud and exploitation.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders should ensure that students on pathway two courses benefit from the same high-quality education as other students.
- Teachers should consider how they plan and introduce activities so that all students can understand and participate in them.
- Leaders should review how the key worker sessions are used to support students' learning.
- Leaders should ensure that high-quality, supported internships are available for students to complete and achieve their potential.

Provider details

Unique reference number	50992
Address	Willis House Tonmead Road Lumbertubs Northampton NN3 8HU
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Website	www.cantolearning.co.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Charlotte Dear
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	11 to 13 October 2016
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of centre, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

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